

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 5 WELLINGTON 1600

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NZ

SUBJECT: SOME REFLECTIONS ON NEW ZEALAND AND THE NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER MULDOON

REF: 76 WELLINGTON 0370

BEGIN SUMMARY: AS INDICATED IN OUR ASSESSMENT A
YEAR AGO, NEW ZEALAND UNDER PRIME MINISTER MULDOON
HAS MOVED INTO CLOSER HARMONY WITH AMERICAN POSITIONS
ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE. U.S. NUCLEAR POWERED
WARSHIPS HAVE VISITED NEW ZEALAND, MULDOON ADMINI-
STERED THE COUP DE GRACE, AS HE HAD PROMISED HE WOULD,
TO THAT SYMBOL OF MISBEGOTTEN NEW ZEALAND LABOUR
PARTY IDEALISM, THE SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR
WEAPONS FREE ZONE AND NEW ZEALAND WAS ALMOST ALWAYS
SYMPATHETIC WITH U.S. POSITIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS
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AND AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES.

DOMESTICALLY, MULDOON'S IMAGE AS A FORMIDABLE
POLITICAL GUT FIGHTER WAS ENHANCED BUT HIS REPUTATION
AS THE ASTUTE FISCAL MANAGER SHOWED SIGNS OF COMING
UNRAVELED. WHILE HE SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING UNEMPLOYMENT
DOWN AND REDUCED TO SOME EXTENT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT'S

SHARE IN THE OVERALL ECONOMY AND THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT, THE HIGH INFLATION RATE WAS HARDLY REDUCED AT ALL AND THE DEFICIT ON OVERSEAS ACCOUNTS REMAINED UNSUSTAINABLY HIGH. THE DOLEFUL FACT FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IS THAT THE AVERAGE NEW ZEALANDER IS A LITTLE WORSE OFF NOW THAN HE WAS A YEAR AGO, AND PROSPECTS ARE THAT HIS ECONOMIC SITUATION WILL DETERIORATE FURTHER IN THE COMING YEAR.

SO IN TRYING TO CARRY OUT HIS ELECTORAL PROMISE TO MANAGE NEW ZEALAND BACK TO ECONOMIC HEALTH, THE PRIME MINISTER STILL FACES, AS HE DID A YEAR AGO, A GRIM AND UNCERTAIN BATTLE. IF THE GREAT AND DISTANT OUTSIDE WORLD WOULD ONLY OPEN UP ITS MARKETS AND ITS PURSES TO NEW ZEALAND'S PRODUCTS, ALL WOULD BE WELL -- OR SO MOST NEW ZEALANDERS FONDLY BELIEVE AND THERE IS AT LEAST SOME VALIDITY TO THIS. BUT A MORE PROBING LOOK AT NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY ITSELF RAISES QUESTIONS OF WHETHER IT MAY NOT LACK THE IMAGINATION, DISCIPLINE, AND UNITY OF PURPOSE TO SUSTAIN ITSELF AT THE PRE-OCTOBER 1973 INCOME LEVEL. THE THOUGHT OCCURS THAT PERHAPS NEW ZEALAND'S BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT ITS PEOPLE ARE UNCERTAIN OF THEIR DIRECTIONS, THAT THEY LACK A SINGLE STRONG POINT -- MATERIAL OR SPIRITUAL -- AROUND WHICH THEY MIGHT RALLY TO MAINTAIN THEIR WELL-BEING. AND IF THE PEOPLE ARE NOT CERTAIN OF THE TRUMPET THEY HEAR, MULDOON CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF HIS OWN FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN HIS REPETITIOUS CLARION CALL UP AND DOWN NEW
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ZEALAND IN THE FALL OF 1975, THEN LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION ROBERT DAVID MULDOON SHOUTED ONE HOARSE REFRAIN, "NEW ZEALAND'S ECONOMY IS GOING TO HELL." INFLATION WAS SO HIGH AND THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT SO DISASTROUS, HE PREACHED, THAT THE COUNTRY'S STANDARD OF LIVING WAS ENDANGERED. HE, MULDOON, THE ASTUTE FISCAL MANAGER, WOULD PUT THE ECONOMY BACK ON THE TRACKS AND MAINTAIN THE PREVIOUS HIGH STANDARD OF CONSUMPTION, EXPLICITLY INCLUDING THE WELFARE STATE. MULDOON PROMISED OTHER THINGS -- TO LIMIT IMMIGRATION INTO NEW ZEALAND, TO PERMIT CONTINUED SPORTING TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA (MEANING ESSENTIALLY AMATEUR RUGBY, IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT A GAME WITH OVERTONES OF MALE SUPERIORITY AND PRIMITIVE RELIGION) AND, WITH BRILLIANT SIMPLICITY, TO REMOVE INCOME LEVEL AS A TEST FOR OLD AGE PENSION ELIGIBILITY. AND MULDOON REDICULED THE ASSUMPTIONS OF MORAL SUPERIORITY EMBODIED IN THE THEN RULING LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES OF BARRING VISITS TO NEW ZEALAND OF AMERICAN NUCLEAR

POWERED WARSHIPS AND SPONSORING IN THE UNITED NATIONS
THE CONCEPT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE
(SPNWFZ).

AND HAVING THE OUTSIDER'S ADVANTAGE OF BEING ABLE
TO ATTACK PLANS THAT HAD NOT WORKED RATHER THAN THE
LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S DISADVANTAGE OF HAVING TO JUSTIFY
POLICIES THAT HAD FAILED, MULDOON MADE A CONVINCING
CASE THAT IT WAS TIME FOR A CHANGE. HE HAD APPEALED
VERY ASTUTELY TO THE NEW ZEALANDERS' BASIC OPTIMISM,
SUMMED UP IN WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED THE UNOFFICIAL
NATIONAL MOTTO OF "SHE'LL BE RIGHT," A STATEMENT OF
SIMPLE FAITH THAT THE SETBACKS AND CURRENT HARDSHIPS
OF LIFE ARE ONLY TEMPORARY DIVERSIONS, AND THAT ALL
WILL SOON BE WELL. NEW ZEALANDERS WANTED TO BELIEVE
MULDOON AND THEY REWARDED HIS NATIONAL PARTY WITH THE
GREATEST POLITICAL UPSET IN NEW ZEALAND HISTORY, BY
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EXACTLY REVERSING THE 55 TO 32 SEAT MAJORITY WHICH
THE LABOUR PARY HAD HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT.

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2. AND IN ANSWERING, "NOT REALLY WELL," THE QUESTION OF HOW MULDOON HAS DONE SINCE HE CAME TO POWER, THE THOUGHT OCCURS THAT IT IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY ENLIGHTENING POLITICALLY OR SATISFYING INTELLECTUALLY TO LOOK AT NEW ZEALAND POLITICS IN A TIME SPAN OF ONLY A YEAR. BUT SOME ATTEMPT AT A DEEPER PERSPECTIVE LATER. MEANWHILE, SOME OBSERVERS WOULD ARGUE THAT MULDOON IS TURNING IN A FINE PERFORMANCE. AND A CASE CAN BE MADE THAT THEY ARE RIGHT, ESPECIALLY IF ANALYSIS IS LIMITED TO THE PERIOD OF LESS THAN A YEAR AND A HALF SINCE MULDOON ASSUMED POWER. NO ONE WILL NOW FOR SURE UNTIL THE VOTERS HAVE REGISTERED THEIR OPIONS IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER 1978. AND CERTAINLY MULDOON HAS ACHIEVED NOTEWORTHY THINGS, SOME OF THEM PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO THE UNITED STATES. HE KILLED THE BAN ON NPW VISITS TO NEW ZEALAND BY WELCOMING CALLS LAST AUGUST BY THE USS TRUXTUN AT WELLINGTON AND IN
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SEPTEMBER BY THE USS LONG BEACH AT AUCKLAND. THESE VISITS HELPED TO DISPROVE THE LOCAL NOTION, FOSTERED BY THE LEFT AND SUSTAINED BY IGNORANCE, THAT NUCLEAR POWERED PROPULSION IS DANGEROUS, AND DEMONSTRATED THAT A LARGE MAJORITY OF NEW ZEALANDERS FAVOR NPW VISITS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ANZUS ALLIANCE.

AT THE ROTORUA (NEW ZEALAND) CONFERENCE IN MARCH 1976 OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM NATIONS, MULDOON DEFTLY DRAINED ALL THE OBJECTIONABLE SUBSTANCE FROM THE SPNWFZ BY GETTING UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS AND AUSTRALIA THAT THE SPNWFZ COULD NOT BE TAKEN TO MEAN ANY LIMITATION ON NAVIGATION OF THE HIGH SEAS OR ANY DIMINUTION OF THE DUTIES OWED BY MEMBER STATES UNDER A DEFENSE ALLIANCE, I.E. ANZUS. THUS MULDOON EFFECTIVELY KILLED THE SPNWFZ WHILE HOLDING OUT THAT HE HAD ONLY CLARIFIED ITS MEANING.

IN WORD AND DEED MULDOON HAS TRIED TO REVITALIZE NEW ZEALAND'S ROLE IN THE ANZUS ALLIANCE. HE HAS INITIATED A STUDY PRESENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE LOOKING TOWARDS HOW NEW ZEALAND'S ARMED FORCES CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY MESH WITH THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA. THE ASSUMPTION BEHIND THIS STUDY IS THAT THE FORCES HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO RUN DOWN TOO FAR AND THAT GREATER RESOURCES MUST BE DEVOTED TO DEFENSE IF NEW ZEALAND IS TO MAINTAIN IT CREDIBI-

LITY AS A RELIABLE ALLY OF AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES. AT THE SAME TIME, A STUDY OF THE COUNTRY'S DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION ABROAD IS UNDER WAY WHICH PROMISES TO RECOMMEND A CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED DIPLOMATIC/TRADE PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOME REPRESENTATION IN BLACK AFRICA, WHERE NEW ZEALAND'S TOTAL ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HAS LED THIS COUNTRY WOEFULLY TO UNDERESTIMATE THE

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STRENGTH OF BLACK AFRICAN OPINION AGAINST NEW ZEALAND'S RUGBY MATCHES WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

A MAN WITH A CLEAR ANTI-SOVIET BIAS, MULDOON TOOK A CRITICAL LINE AGAINST MOSCOW LAST APRIL WHEN HE VISITED PEKING, BEING PERHAPS THE LAST WESTERN VISITOR TO SEE MAO ALIVE. LATER MULDOON SPOKE DRAMATICALLY, AND APPARENTLY NOT VERY ACCURATELY, OF SOVIET WARSHIPS TRANSITTING THE TASMAN SEA. HE SUBSEQUENTLY EASED AWAY FROM THAT CHARGE, BUT MAINTAINED HIS CREDIBILITY BY POINTING TO THE POTENTIAL THREAT CONSTITUTED BY SOVIET EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH SHORE FACILITIES FOR ITS FISHING FLEET IN NEW ZEALAND'S STRATEGIC BACKYARD OF TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA. IN FACT, SOVIET/CHINESE RIVALRY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC MAY HAVE DONE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TO BLUNT THE ONLY LOCAL ARGUMENT WITH ANY SEMBLANCE OF VALIDITY AGAINST A MILITARY LINK WITH THE UNITED STATES, NAMELY, THAT THERE IS NO CREDIBLE EXTERNAL THREAT TO NEW ZEALAND, AND THUS NO REASON TO BEAR THE EXPENSE OF A BIGGER MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT OR TO RUN THE RISK OF HAVING NEW ZEALAND SUCKED INTO AN AMERICAN-SOVIET MILITARY CLASH.

3. AT HOME THE MULDOON GOVERNMENT'S GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS KEEPING UNEMPLOYMENT VERY LOW, CERTAINLY LESS THAN TWO PER CENT EVEN BY THE MOST ALL-INCLUSIVE METHOD OF CALCULATION. FAILURE ON THIS FRONT WOULD ALREADY HAVE DISCREDITED MULDOON AND THE FACT THAT UNEMPLOYMENT HAS REMAINED AT PERHAPS THE LOWEST LEVEL IN THE WESTERN WORLD IS STANDING THE GOVERNMENT IN GOOD STEAD. ANOTHER ACCOMPLISHMENT IS THAT THE 1975 BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT OF \$1 BILLION WAS REDUCED IN 1976, THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S FIRST FULL YEAR IN OFFICE, TO AROUND \$600 MILLION. MULDOON WAS LUCKY ON THIS FRONT AS PRICES FOR MANY OF NEW ZEALAND'S AGRICULTURAL

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EXPORTS ATTAINED THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN HISTORY, BUT THE PLAIN FACT WAS A REDUCTION OF \$400 MILLION IN THE ANNUAL DEFICIT AND THE GOVERNMENT, OF COURSE, CLAIMS AND GETS THE CREDIT. MULDOON'S COMPREHENSIVE OLD-AGE PENSION BILL REMOVING INCOME LEVEL AS A TEST FOR ELIGIBILITY TOOK EFFECT AS PROMISED ON FEBRUARY 1. ONE HEARS GRUMBLING OF DOUBT ABOUT WHERE THE MONEY IS TO COME FROM TO PAY THE GRADUALLY INCREASING COSTS OF THESE PENSION, BUT FOR THE TIME BEING THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT ARE GETTING THE CREDIT FOR HAVING OUT-PROMISED AND OUT-PERFORMED THE SOCIALISTS, JUST AS OLD OTTO VON BISMARCK DID IN GERMANY A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

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4. AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AT SOME BASIC NEW ZEALAND ATTITUDES AND WAYS OF DOING THINGS. MULDOON PROMISED TO CUT IMMIGRATION TO A NET GAIN OF 5,000 A YEAR AND TO DEPORT "OVERSTAYERS," I.E., ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. HE ARGUED IN HIS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN THAT HOUSING SHORTAGES, GROWING STREET CRIME, INFLATION AND VARIOUS OTHER ILL OF SOCIETY HAD BEEN BROUGHT ON

OR AGGRAVATED BY THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF ENCOURAGING ANNUAL 25,000 TO 30,000 NET IMMIGRATION GAIN. ALTHOUGH A LOGICAL CASE COULD BE MADE THAT SKYROCKETING OIL PRICES AND THE WORLD ECONOMIC RECESSION -- WHICH HAD HIT NEW ZEALAND WITH SUCH PECULIAR FORCE -- WAS THE REAL CAUSE OF THESE NEW ILLS OF SOCIETY, MULDOON'S SUGGESTION THAT HEAVY IMMIGRATION WAS TO BLAME APPEALED TO A DEEPLY FELT NEW ZEALAND ASSUMPTION, NAMELY, THAT THIS COUNTRY IS AN EARTHLY
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PARADISE, AN UNSULLIED EDEN, STILL UNTOUCHED IN ITS GLORIOUS REMOTENESS (WHAT PARADISE IS NOT REMOTE*) BY THE CRASS MATERIALISM AND CRUEL EXPLOITATIONS OF OLDER SOCIETIES. NEW ZEALAND WAS SO ADMIRABLE IN PART, IT WAS FELT, BECAUSE IT WAS A SPARSELY SETTLED LAND OF BARELY THREE MILLION LIKE-MINDED SOULS. IT WAS GOD'S OWN COUNTRY, OFTEN SHORTENED TO "GODZONE." ALTHOUGH THIS CONCEPT OF NEW ZEALAND WAS PURER, AND INDEED MORALLY MORE WORTHY THAN OTHER COUNTRIES WAS SOMETIMES GENTLY SATIRIZED BY MORE WORDLY NEW ZEALANDERS WHO HAD SEEN SOMETHING OF THE SUPPOSEDLY PROFANE OUTSIDE WORLD, IT WAS NEVERTHELESS AN UNQUESTIONED TENET OF FAITH OF A MAJORITY OF NEW ZEALANDERS. AFTER ALL, HAD "GODZONE" NOT BEEN DREAMED OF THEN CREATED BY IDEALISTIC SCOTS, WELSHMEN, IRISHMEN AND ENGLISHMEN FLEEING THE HORROR AND UNCARING GREED OF THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL SWEATSHOPS? AND COULD ANYONE ARGUE AGAINST PRESERVING WHAT HAD BEEN CREATED?

ONE OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF PRIME MINISTER MULDOON IS HIS INSTINCT TO APPEAL TO NEW ZEALANDERS ON MORE THAN ONE LEVEL. ON ONE LEVEL HIS CALL FOR REDUCED IMMIGRATION APPEALED TO NEW ZEALAND IDEALISM. ON ANOTHER LEVEL, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS SHREWED ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT HIS CAMPAIGN TO KEEP NEW ZEALAND SMALL AND RESTRICTED WOULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO A LARGE BODY OF NEW ZEALANDERS OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN WHO WERE UNEASY THAT CONTINUED HEAVY IMMIGRATION OF POLYNESIANS FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS MIGHT GRADUALLY ALTER THE EUROPEAN CHARACTER OF NEW ZEALAND. VALUED THOUGH THESE IMMIGRANT POLYNESIANS MIGHT BE FOR THEIR WILLINGNESS TO WORK LONG HOURS DOING THE DIRTIER CHORES OF SOCIETY, SOME OF THEM GOT DRUNK AND BRAWLED WITH BEST OF THEM ON SATURDAY NIGHTS IN THE ALIEN STREETS OF AUCKLAND AND OTHER FACTORY TOWNS, CONTRIBUTING (POSSIBLY) MORE THAN THEIR SHARE TO "BLUE COLLAR" NEW ZEALAND'S NIGHT
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MASSACRE." THIS BEER ORGY IN WHICH BOOZERS SMASH EACH OTHER WITH FISTS AND BOTTLES, AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITH AUTOMOBILES ON THE HIGHWAYS, BEWILDERED MANY GENTEEL, RURAL ORIENTED NEW ZEALANDERS WHO HARKENED BACK TO A GOLDEN AGE, IMAGINED OR NOT, WHEN GENTLER VIRTUES WERE PRACTICED BY A MORALITY CENTERED CITIZENRY.

AS IT TURNED OUT MULDOON'S PROMISE TO CUT IMMIGRATION TO A NET GAIN OF 5,000 SUCCEEDED ALL TOO WELL. FOR THE LATEST STATISTICS SHOW THAT THE NET LOSS FOR 1976 WAS MORE THAN 12,000, MADE UP IN GOOD PART, IT APPEARS, OF ARTISANS, ELECTRICIANS, CARPENTERS, PLUMBERS AND OTHER SKILLED PERSONS WITHOUT WHOM NEW ZEALAND'S HOPE OF EXPANDING ITS INDUSTRIAL BASE WILL BE HAMPERED. BUT THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THIS HEAVY LOSS OF PEOPLE HAS EASED THE PROBLEMS OF HOUSING, STREET CRIME OR INFLATION. NEVERTHELESS, MULDOON PROBABLY GETS A NET PLUS FROM MOST NEW ZEALANDERS ON THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE IN SPITE OF APPREHENSIONS VOICED BY LABOUR PARTY POLITICIANS THAT THE COUNTRY IS LOSING THE PEOPLE IT CAN LEAST AFFORD TO LOSE.

5. ON THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FRONT MULDOON'S REPUTATION AS A FORMIDABLE POLITICAL INFIGHTER WAS ENHANCED, WHILE THE LABOUR PARTY OPPOSITION WAS GENERALLY INEFFECTIVE, DUE IN CONSIDERABLE PART TO THE WEAKNESS OF OPPOSITION LEADER (AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER) BILL ROWLING. DURING THE YEAR AT LEAST TWO TRADE UNIONS WITHDREW FROM THE LABOUR PARTY. HIGHLIGHTING THE CONTINUING UNEASY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR GROUPS MAKING UP THE PARTY: THE TRADE UNIONS (WORKERS) AND THE INTELLECTUALS. ROWLING CONTINUED TO APPEAR AS AN EXCEPTIONALLY NICE GUY, BUT SOMETIMES INEPT AND LACKING IN PERSONAL FORCE PARTICULARLY IN CONTRAST WITH THE UNUSUALLY ASSERTIVE MULDOON.

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AND A FEW MONTHS AGO, THE MOST ATTRACTIVE AND PERHAPS THE MOST CAPABLE OPPOSITION POLITICIAN, FORMER MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE COLIN MOYLE, WAS POLITICALLY DESTROYED BY PRIME MINISTER MULDOON. MOYLE, REGARDED BY MANY AS A POTENTIAL FUTURE PRIME MINISTER, HAD BECOME ADEPT AT THE CLEVER PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVER OF GETTING IN DIGS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT COMMITTING A TECHNICAL BREACH OF PARLIAMENTARY RULES ON WHICH HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN REPRIMANDED BY THE SPEAKER.

IN A HEATED PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE, MULDOON IN EFFECT BRUTALLY ACCUSED MOYLE, A MARRIED MAN WITH SEVERAL CHILDREN, OF BEING A HOMOSEXUAL. MOYLE HOTLY DENIED THE CHARGE, BUT LATER GOT HIMSELF TANGLED UP IN CONFLICTING EXPLANATIONS OF WHY HE HAD TRIED TO PICK UP A PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN ONE WELLINGTON MIDNIGHT IN JUNE 1975. MEANWHILE ROWLING MISCALCULATED DISASTROUSLY IN IMPULSIVELY DEMANDING A JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO MULDOON'S ACCUASTIONS. THE INQUIRY EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTED MULDOON'S CHARGE AND MOYLE RESIGNED FROM PARLIAMENT. THE ONLY CRUMB OF COMFORT LABOUR CAN CLAIM

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IS THAT IN THE MANGERE (SUBURB OF AUCKLAND) BY-ELECTION TO FILL MOYLE'S SEAT THE LABOUR CANDIDATE MORE THAN DOUBLED MOYLE'S 1975 MAJORITY. BUT THAT WAS ONLY SMALL COMFORT, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT ANOTHER LABOUR PARTY POLITICIAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GERALD O'BRIEN, HAD ALSO BEEN IMPLICATED IN TWO WIDELY PUBLICIZED INCIDENTS WITH HOMOSEXUAL OVERTONES.

6. THUS WITH MULDOON HAVING LIVED UP TO MOST OF HIS ELECTORAL PROMISES AND WITH THE LABOUR PARTY BEING IN CONSIDERABLE DISARRAY, THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT SEEM

TO FACE CLEAR SAILING TOWARDS THE 1978 GENERAL ELECTIONS.
BUT THAT RECKONS WITHOUT THE CONTINUING CRUEL INFLATION
WHICH AT ALMOST 15 PERCENT IN 1976 REDUCED THE AVERAGE NEW
ZEALANDER'S STANDARD OF LIVING. INFLATION WILL ALMOST
CERTAINLY BRING ABOUT A FURTHER REDUCTION IN 1977.
AND THIS IN SPITE OF MULDOON'S DETERMINED EFFORTS
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TO LIMIT WAGE INCREASES, RESTRAIN IMPORTS AND SHED,
AT UNDOUBTED POLITICAL RISK TO HIMSELF, SOME OF THE
HEAVY BURDEN OF THE SACROSANCT NEW ZEALAND WELFARE
STATE WHICH MADE ITS DEBUT ON THE POLITICAL SCENE
WITH THE ELECTION IN 1935 OF MICHAEL SAVAGE TO LEAD
THE FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

THE BLEAK DAYS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN NEW
ZEALAND HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT WITH PIVOTAL EFFECT
IN "THE SUGAR BAG YEARS," A RECENTLY PUBLISHED ORAL
HISTORY OF OUT OF WORK MEN BUMMING AROUND THE COUNTRY
WITH BURLAP BAGS INTO WHICH MIGHT BE THRUST SOME
BEGGED, BORROWED OR STOLEN GOODIES. PERHAPS THE MOST
MEMORABLE IMPRESSION FROM THE SUGAR BAG
YEARS IS THE OFTEN PASSIONATE CONVICTION OF THE
NARRATORS THAT THE PRE-1935 GOVERNMENT UNDER GEORGE
FORBES HAD CALLOUSLY LET MEN SUFFER WITHOUT SPENDING
GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL RESERVES THAT MIGHT HAVE ALLEVIATED
THE CRISIS. THE FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT DID APPEND TO
SOME GOOD EFFECT, AND WITH THE ADVENT OF WORLD WAR II
A PERIOD OF PROSPERITY ENSUED. THIS PATTERNED OF
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS HELPED TO CREATE A LABOUR
PARTY MYTHOLOGY, SHARED INDEED BY MANY NON-LABOUR
PEOPLE, THAT SPENDING MONEY AND MAINTAINING THE WELFARE
STATE WILL BRING ABOUT PROSPERITY. AMONG THE MORE
IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED THIS APPEARS TO HAVE DIVERTED
ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING TO
PRODUCE WEALTH. AND THE NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION TO
WORK BEING IN ANY CASE HARDLY GERMANIC THE NOTION
THAT THE GOOD LIFE CAN BE HAD WITHOUT TOO MUCH EFFORT
HAS WIDE APPEAL.

GIVEN THE EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT OF NEW ZEALANDERS
TO THE WELFARE STATE, MULDOON HAS SHOWN POLITICAL
COURAGE IN TRIMMING BACK SUBSIDIES ON FOOD, POSTAGE,
TRANSPORTATION AND HOSPITAL CARE. BUT ALL MULDOON'S
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ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL INFLATION HAVE SO FAR BEEN TO LITTLE AVAIL. IT IS TEMPTING TO MANY NEW ZEALANDERS TO BLAME THE HIGH PRICE OF IMPORTED OIL, WHICH THIS YEAR WILL COME TO \$550 MILLION VERSUS \$90 MILLION IN 1972. BUT A HARDER LOOK GIVES RISE TO THE THOUGHT THAT NEW ZEALAND'S BASIC WOES ARE MAINLY HOME GROWN, AND VERY DIFFICULT, IF NOT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE, TO EASE. IF THIS GLOOMY IDEA PROVES TO BE THE CASE MULDOON'S PROMISE THAT HE COULD MANAGE NEW ZEALAND BACK TO ECONOMIC HEALTH CAN BE AT BEST ONLY PARTIALLY FULFILLED. WE CERTAINLY CANNOT SAY THAT HE WILL FAIL, FOR MULDOON IS A DETERMINED MAN WHO HAS TAKEN ALL THE RIGHT STEPS - BUT A DEBILITATING INFLATION CONTINUES TO STARE HIS COUNTRY IN THE FACE. THE THOUGH OCCURS THAT IN THE NEW ECONOMIC ERA OF HIGH ENERGY PRICES, NEW ZEALAND IS SHORT OF THE NATURAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN ITS CURRENT STANDARD OF LIFE.

7. UNLIKE AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND IS POOR IN MINERALS WITH ONLY AN OFFSHORE GAS FIELD TO HELP MEET ITS BURGEONING ENERGY COSTS, NOW RUNNING AT MORE THAN HALF A BILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY FOR PETROLEUM ALONE. GRASS AND MORE GRASS IS THIS COUNTRY'S BASIC NATURAL RESOURCE - THAT AND THE FACT THAT WINTERS ARE SO MILD IN MOST OF THE COUNTRY THAT GRASS IS NOT KILLED BY FROST. BUT UNFORTUNATELY MOST OF NEW ZEALAND IS EXTREMELY HILLY, AND THOSE HILLS GROW LITTLE GRASS WITHOUT EXPENSIVE FERTILIZER, WHICH AGAIN UNFORTUNATELY HAS RISEN IN COST WITH THE PRICE OF PETROLEUM. THUS THE GOVERNMENT'S TALK ABOUT INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY ON THE LAND -MEANING ESSENTIALLY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK PER ACRE - SEEMS OF QUESTIONABLE FEASIBILITY. FOR FARMERS HAVE TO BE SURE OF SELLING ANY ADDITIONAL LIVESTOCK AT A PROFIT BEFORE THEY WILL UNDERTAKE HIGHER COSTS. AND WITH THE TRADITIONAL

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BRITISH MARKET NO LONGER A SURE THING, INCREASING NUMBERS OF LIVESTOCK MAY NOT FIND A MARKET. OIL IS BEING PROSPECT FOR OFF SOUTH ISLAND BY THE AMERICAN CONSORTIUM OF BUNKER-HUNT AND PHILLIPS, BUT CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE UNCERTAIN.

8. IF NEW ZEALAND HAD A HIGHLY SKILLED AND ENERGETIC WORK FORCE, OR A GREAT TALENT FOR ORGANIZATION AND GOOD LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS, ALL MIGHT YET BE WELL FOR THE COUNTRY. BUT ALAS NONE OF THESE IS THE CASE. IN TRYING TO GET GREATER PRODUCTIVITY OUT OF

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01 IO-13 ACDA-07
SIL-01 LAB-04 COME-00 /101 W
-----300449Z 074576 /11

R 292229Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3127
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SUVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 5 OF 5 WELLINGTON 1600

HIS PEOPLE PRIME MINISTER MULDOON IS FACED WITH WHAT HAS SOMETIMES BEEN CALLED THE NEW ZEALAND DISEASE, CORRESPONDING TO A SIMILAR MALAISE IN ENGLAND. MANY OF THE ORIGINAL IMMIGRANTS CAME HERE TO ESCAPE THE FOUL SWEAT SHOPS OF EARLY INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN. AND IMPORTED CLASS RESENTMENTS PERSIST. FOR IN A COUNTRY WHERE EGALITARIANISM IS A CENTRAL THEME OF SOCIETY, CLASS RESENTMENTS ARE PARADOXICALLY DEEP AND BITTER. A LITTLE-KNOWN MAN - OR AT LEAST UNEARD OF BY THE GREAT BULK OF THE NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC - DID MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON TO PLANT THE IDEA THAT HARD WORK FOR ANOTHER MAN MEANT EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKER. THAT MAN WAS SAMUEL DUNCAN PARNELL, A SCOTTISH BORN CARPENTER WHO DIED IN WELLINGTON IN 1890. PARNELL'S IDEA IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPLACABLE ENEMY FACING PRIME MINISTER MULDOON. PARNELL ARRIVED IN WELLINGTON ON THE FIRST BOAT IN 1840. WHEN HE AND HIS FRIENDS
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MET THE SECOND BOATLOAD OF IMMIGRANTS A FEW MONTHS LATER CONDITIONS FOR COMING ASHORE WERE SET. THESE WERE THAT NO PERSON WOULD WORK MORE THAN EIGHT HOURS A DAY, NOR WORK ON WEEKENDS. AND THAT BECAME THE FIXED IDEA OF NEW ZEALAND TRADE UNIONISM.

BURIED ON A HIGH HILL OVERLOOKING WELLINGTON HARBOR, PARNELL'S SHADE CAN LOOK DOWN WITH SATISFACTION ON WELLINGTON HARBOR WHERE SHIPS ARE NEVER UNLOADED AT NIGHT, OVER WEEKENDS, WHEN IT IS RAINING, OR EVEN CLOUDY, MAKING WELLINGTON AND OTHER PORTS IN NEW ZEALAND PERHAPS THE MOST INEFFICIENT IN THE WORLD. PARNELL'S GRAVESTONE CREDITS HIM WITH BEING THE FATHER OF THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY. AND WHEN TALK BEGINS, AS IT DOES RECURRINGLY HERE, THAT STORES AND SHOPS SHOULD BE OPENED ON SATURDAYS AS A NEEDED SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC, PASSIONATE OUTCRIES ARE HEARD THAT THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKERS. AND NOTHING EVER COMES -- OR NOTHING HAS EVER COME SO FAR -- OF EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH WEEKEND SHOPPING. AND THAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE FACT THAT NEW ZEALAND'S CITIES, INCLUDING THE CAPITAL CITY OF WELLINGTON, RESEMBLE ON WEEKENDS NEVIL SHUTE'S PEOPLELESS FICTIONAL WORLD AFTER NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST, "ON THE BEACH."

9. NOTHING IN THE FOREGOING PARAGRAPH IS MEANT AS A UNILATERAL INDICTMENT OF NEW ZEALAND WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS. FOR IN FACT NEW ZEALAND'S BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIAL MANAGERS ARE EQUALLY UNIMAGINATIVE AND LACKING IN DRIVE. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING CREATIVE SUCH AS THE WORKER-MANAGEMENT CODETERMINATION OF WEST GERMANY WILL EVER MARK THE STERILE ENVIRONMENT OF THIS COUNTRY. ONLY THE OTHER DAY THE TORY MINISTER OF LABOUR PETER GORDON BLASTED NEW ZEALAND BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL MANAGERS AS OFTEN NOT KNOWING OR CARING

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WHAT THEIR EMPLOYEES ARE DOING.

10. EVERYTHING EVENTUALLY GETS DOWN TO THE SPIRIT, IN NEW ZEALAND AS ELSEWHERE. AND ONE MUST WONDER IF THIS COUNTRY IS NOT POOREST OF ALL IN SPIRIT, IN SENSE OF IDENTITY, IN SOUL. A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THIS MYSTERIOUS EMPTINESS IS THAT FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING NEW ZEALAND WAS A GIANT BRITISH FARM CATERING TO A GUARANTEED BRITISH MARKET. PEOPLE TRADITIONALLY REGARDED BRITAIN AS HOME AND TO THIS DAY MANY NEW ZEALANDERS OF MIDDLE AGE AND OLDER SPEAK OF GOING HOME TO LONDON. SOME MONUMENTAL COMMON

DISASTER SUCH AS, SAY, THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, MIGHT
HAE CREATED A COMMON SENSE OF SUFFERING AND IDENTITY
THAT PEOPLE COULD LOOK TO WITH QUIET AND UNIFYING
PRIDE. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S TRAGIC MISCALCULATION AT
GALLIPOLI, WHERE 7,500 NEW ZEALANDERS WERE KILLED OR
WOUNDED IN 1915, MIGHT HAVE FORGED THAT SPIRIT.
BUT NOT QUITE. FOR AGAIN, THOSE SALUGHTER HOUSE
SCENES WERE ENACTED FOR THE KING AND FOR BRITAIN.
ON ANZAC DAY (AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND ARMY
CORPS OF WORLD WAR I) ORATORS HARK BACK TO GALLIPOLI
AS THE CRUCIBLE THAT FORGED NEW ZEALAND NATIONHOOD.
BUT HARDLY MORE THAN ONE PERSON IN TEN PASSING THE
CENOTAPH IN DOWNTOWN WELLINGTON REALIZES THAT THE
MEMORIAL, STAINED WITH CORRODING COOPER AND PIGEON
DROPPINGS, REALLY STANDS FOR GALLIPOLI WHERE THE
ORATORS SAY NEW ZEALAND FOUND ITSELF.

ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE WELLINGTON
CENOTAPH STANDS ANOTHER MONUMENT TO NEW ZEALAND, AS
GLOOMY IN ITS OWN WAY AS GALLIPOLI, I.E., THE RUSTING
STEEL SKELETON OF THE UNFINISHED BANK OF NEW ZEALAND
BUILDING. BOILERMAKERS (STRUCTURAL STEEL WORKERS)
STOPPED WORK ON THIS HALF COMPLETED STRUCTURE 18
MONTHS AGO IN AN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE SO MINOR THAT EVEN
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ITS NATURE IS TODAY FORGOTTEN. BUT \$1.5 MILLION WORTH
OF CORRODING STRUCTURAL STEEL STANDS 70 METERS IN THE
AIR, PROVIDING AN OBSTACLE AROUND WHICH WELLINGTON
GALES MOAN THEIR DIRGE TO NEW ZEALAND. AND NO ONE
WILL GIVE A CENTIMETER TO END SUCH WASTE AS THIS THAT
THE COUNTRY CAN SO ILL AFFORD.

THE BRITISH MARKET IS SLOWLY CLOSING TO NEW ZEALAND
GOODS AND BRITAIN IS NO LONGER HOME. OTHER MARKETS MUST
BE FOUND AND A NEW IDENTITY CONSOLIDATED. MEANWHILE
MULDOON CONTINUES TO ACT WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT
HE CAN MANAGE THE COUNTRY BACK TO ECONOMIC HEALTH, AND
HE HAS NOT FAILED SO FAR TO TAKE ANY CTION THAT SHOULD
HAVE BEEN TAKEN. BUT THE PATIENT IS RESPONDING SO POORLY
THAT THE 1978 GENERAL ELECTIONS MAY FACE THE PRIME
MINISTER WITH A SURVIVAL TEST. NO PREDICTIONS ARE
VENTURED THAT MULDOON WILL NOT MAKE IT, BUT IT IS WELL
TO KEEP IN MIND THAT HIS FUTURE AND THAT OF NEW ZEALAND
ARE NOT CLEAR.
KILLGORE

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